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ABSTRACT

Over 1,100 community and junior colleges are currently enrolling students in the United States. In Arizona, California, Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado where the proportion of the population is about 20 percent Spanish speaking, there are about 210 two-year colleges. Studies indicate that 75 percent of all Mexican Americans attending post-secondary education are enrolled in community colleges. In 1971, there were 121,897 students enrolled in Texas community colleges; of these, 17,893 (14.6 percent) were Mexican Americans. Yet, few 2-year colleges report any significant progress in bilingual-bicultural education. The El Paso Community College is one of the few which has achieved some degree of success in bilingual-bicultural programs. It has pursued an instructional improvement phase which focuses on the development of a competency-based, learner-oriented model of instruction in which faculty development is essential. This paper discusses the learner-oriented model being developed at El Paso Community College. (NQ)

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AN OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

by

Gilberto de los Santos
El Paso Community College

Paper Presented at

Symposium on Bilingual/Bicultural Education: Effects on the Language, Individual and Society, June 12-14, 1975, El Paso, Texas.

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AN OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. National and State Perspectives

Historically, Southwestern public educational institutions have failed to respond to culturally different students. Schools persist in judging all students by conventional standards while ignoring real differences and deprivations. Typically, non-traditional students enter school at a disadvantage and just as typically leave in much the same fashion. Current statistical data indicate that of any single ethnic group (with the exception of Native Americans), the Spanish speaking group has the lowest educational level, the highest dropout rate and the lowest proportionate percentage enrolled in institutions of higher education (1). Reluctance on the part of the Spanish speaking to abandon their cultural and linguistic heritage and the inability of others to achieve an understanding of their culture and language accounts, in part, for less than adequate participation by the Spanish speaking in programs available to serve them (1). In Texas, by the eighth grade nearly three-fourths of the Mexican Americans are reading below their grade level. By the 12th grade, almost half of those who started first grade (47 percent) have dropped out. Blacks have fared only slightly better (2). The Coleman, Newman, and Jencks Reports dramatically illustrate on a national scope the failure of traditional educational approaches to successfully reach disfranchised minorities.

B. El Paso County Perspective

El Paso County with a population of 370,000 (2.8 percent Black and 56.9 percent Spanish surnamed or whose primary language is Spanish) is the largest metropolitan area located on the United States-Mexico border (4). Like other border communities, it has one of the highest incidences of poverty and lowest educational attainment rates in the United States. More than 10,000 Mexican American families live below what is considered poverty level by federal government definition. The city of El Paso, with over 333,000 inhabitants, was recently designated as the second "poorest" major city in the United States with 30.3 percent of the city's population classified as "poor" by OEO standards. Over 46,000 (54.8 percent) of Mexican Americans 25 years of age or over have completed eight or less years of school (4).

II. THE NEED FOR BILINGUAL BICULTURAL EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Over 1,100 community and junior colleges are currently enrolling students in the United States in 1975. These colleges serve approximately 3,500,000 students from different ethnic groups and income levels. Almost 50 percent of the students enrolled in two-year colleges are pursuing technical vocational or occupational programs with the others pursuing a baccalaureate degree or some other personal goal. In Arizona, California, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado where the proportion of the popultation is about 20 percent Spanish speaking, there are about 210 two-year colleges. A 1972 report by the College Entrance Examination Board in Austin, Texas indicated that 17 percent of the students enrolled in two-year colleges have a Spanish surname. This survey was made in Southwestern cities with a population of more than 50,000 Chicanos. While this figure might appear high, other studies indicate that 75 percent of all Mexican Americans attending post-secondary education are enrolled in community colleges. Other states also report a significant number of bilingual students in New York, Florida, Chicago, and Washington where large numbers of Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans and Cubans reside. Out of 121,897 students in Texas community colleges in 1971, 17,893 (14.6 percent) were Mexican Americans.

Yet, few two-year colleges report any significant progress in bilingual-bicultural education. Hostos Community College in New York, Pima College in Arizona, East Los Angeles Community College in California and El Paso Community College in Texas have initiated some encouraging bilingual-bicultural programs. Barely a handful of other colleges in California are also attempting to teach in the native language of a sizeable segment of their population. Other colleges are offering ethnic studies courses which sensitize minority students

and majority students to the background, history, and culture of culturally distinctive ethnic groups. While these efforts help, they are less than effective with students of limited English speaking experience.

Although the need for bilingual, multicultural materials has been amply documented and to a certain extent recognized, two-year colleges have failed to make meaningful progress toward this goal. The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges 1972 Assembly, a group of 100 community college leaders and representatives from industry, emphasized the thrust that community and junior colleges should take in providing multi-cultural and bilingual education. One of the priorities identified in the 1973 and 1974 Assembly reports is the increased efforts which these colleges must undertake in recognizing linguistically different students in their curriculum and in their teaching. In Texas and California, legislation was approved to provide instruction in a student's dominant language. House Bills 145 and 146 were introducted in the Texas Legislature by Representative Carlos Turan from Corpus Christi — and backed by the Governor of Texas — provide for the training of bilingual teaching personnel, for the compensation of such personnel, and for establishing bilingual curricula in areas where a high percentage or number of bilingual citizens reside. Pima College in Arizona has instituted as one of its main purposes the creation of a multi-cultural, bilingual learning environment.

Community colleges are caught, as if by a vise, between two opposing pressures. On the one hand, linguistically distinctive students are enrolling in large numbers. These students are attracted to community colleges because of the "promise" that these colleges by implication are assumed to make. With "open door" admission policies, low or free tuition, relative accessibility,

close proximity, and diversified programs which are supposed to be tailored to the characteristics of the local community; these colleges offer attractive alternatives. Many community colleges are also actively recruiting non-traditional students. On the other hand, the number of trained bilingual, bicultural instructors these colleges need is not available. While other professional fields may have on over supply of trained personnel, the short supply of bilingual - bicultural instructors reaches catastrophic diminutive proportions.

In California, the percentage of Mexican American students enrolled in community colleges in 1973 was nearly 10 percent. Conversely, Mexican American personnel in these California institutions is only 3.3 percent. In Texas, and the other Southwestern states discrepancies are even larger. However, even these inequities fail to indicate accurately the drastic shortage of bilingual educational personnel. Just because a person is bilingual does not mean he (or she) can teach bilingually. We have to keep in mind that bilingual individuals have acquired their education through a monolingual, monocultural educational system. Schools at all levels have steadfastly maintained their rigid curriculum aimed at the "average" American.

Large sums of monies allocated for professional personnel development have ignored the bilingual personnel training demands. The large sums appropriated over the past six years for the Educations Professions Development Act, Title V-E have not been used to help develop bilingual teaching personnel. Title III funds to "strengthen developing institutions" have reached few institutions with large numbers of linguistically distinctive students.

Even the scarce funds allocated for the development of bilingual teachers have either been lost in the process or failed to provide even a limited impact Senators Cranston, Kennedy, and Tower fought for, and obtained five percent of

EPDA — Title I-D funds as "set aside" funds for training bilingual teachers in the 1973 Fiscal Year budget. These funds did not create any significant new programs.

The above-mentioned facts illustrate to some extent the magnitude of the task for any two-year college to implement a bilingual-bicultural instructional program. In order to succeed, El Paso Community College and less than a handfull of other two-year colleges, "have had to go at it on their own".

III. EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A. The Nature of the Institution

El Paso Community College opened its doors to 901 students in the Fall Semester, 1971. Enrollment increased more than ten-fold in three years to 9,400 students in the Fall 1973-74. A unique feature of the college is that the ethnic composition of its student body is truly representative of the ethnic composition of its community. Enrollment for the Spring Semester 1975 is 55% Mexican American, 36% Caucasian, 7% Black, 1% Native American, and 1% other. Furthermore, the college, in its fourth year of operation, is enrolling more than 2.1 percent of the population within its district. This percentage compares favorably with some of the "better" urban community colleges in Texas, thus partially indicating the college's effectiveness in moving quickly to serve a commendable proportion of its community population.

In addition to extensive programs in technical-vocational education, general education, transfer education, and continuing education and community services; the college has initiated programs specifically aimed to serve non-traditional students. Working in cooperation with organizations such as NYC, Educational Talent Search, Operation SER, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Upward Bound, Trinity OIC Coalition, Father Rahm Clinic, Project BRAVO, local health organizatinos, A.L.I.V.I.A.N.E., the El Paso Public Schools, the University of Texas at El Paso, and several veterans organizations, the college provides educational programs of two years or less which are desperately needed within the community. Utilizing the "college without walls concept", El Paso Community College offers classes in high schools, community centers, housing projects, technical-vocational schools, and a main campus. In fact, the college had no campus its first year of operation. Even today, more than 40

percent of the students attend classes during the evening in the five teaching centers leased from the public schools located throughout El Paso.

Within a relatively short period of time and with scarce resources El Paso Community College has implemented the following programs for non-traditional students: (1) A veterans assistance program to recruit and counsel educationally deprived veterans; (2) A nurse retention program to supplement instruction in the college's Associate Degree Nursing program; (3) A Special Services program to provide "peer" tutors and counselors for low-income, non-traditional students; (4) A right to Read program to provide developmental reading; (5) A Moody Foundation program to establish communications and mathematics programmed invididualized instructional laboratories; (6) Headstart supplementary teacher training courses; (7) An Upward Bound Educational Talent Search program for Vietnam Veterans; (8) and an Allied Health recruitment and retention program to recruit low-income and minority students into allied health career fields and to give them entry level skills and confidence necessary for completing their intended programs of study: Ft. Bliss, an army base of approximately 20,000 personnel, is located in El Paso. The College has quickly moved to serve military men by becoming a Service Men's Opportunity College and this move will allow the college to more adequately serve other adult non-military residents.

The above-mentioned programs partially illustrate El Paso Community College's commitment and progress to serve non-traditional students of El Paso in a comprehensive manner. Perhaps somewhat untypically, these programs are integrated within the regular college curriculum.

Since its inception, El Paso Community College has pursued a determined thrust in instructional improvement. Progress in this institutional priority however, has not been made as rapidly or as intensively as students needs dic-

tate. The instructional improvement phase focuses on the development of a competency-based, learner-oriented model of instruction in which faculty development is essential. The El Paso Community College faculty has participated in fifteen days of workshops stressing the systems approach to instruction, individualized instruction, behavioral objectives, cultural awareness, and bilingual education. Applicants who displayed an inclination to try out these approaches have been employed, many of these faculty members are currently producing individualized materials on a limited basis. Furthermore, because of the rich ethnic composition of the El Paso Community College community, a bilingual-bicultural approach to individualized instruction is considered essential.

The learner-oriented model being developed at El Paso Community College as applied to non-traditional students is based on Bloom's thesis that 95 percent of the students can reach a high mastery level of the subject matter being taught provided a supportive learning environment is created which allows for student differences. Rather than provide "special" programs for special students, comprehensive measures are taken to allow students to become active participants in helping each other and themselves. For example, low-income work-study students — many of whom in the past have not achieved high grades — are employed as student tutors and student counselors. These students are provided with continuing cultural awareness, sensitivity, and self-programmed control trainining with the intention of developing tutors and counselors who can in turn become effective in helping their peers. In this way, the program benefits tutors as well as tutees, and counselors as well as students being counseled. Students enrolled in developmental studies are also enrolled in university parallel courses or technical-vocational programs. Rather than provide a few bilingual-bicultural courses, the emphasis is to in-

corporate the bilingual-bicultural element in most courses. This is an attempt to adapt the institution t. students, instead of the students to the institution.

B. Specific Examples

The college has achieved some degree of success in bilingual-bicultural programs which have had adequate funding. The two-year Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program supported partially by a Nurse Retention federal grant of $39,117 has incorporated the following elements of an individualized systems approach to instruction:

1. learning modules utilizing paper and pencil developed packages and other media.
2. behavioral objectives for learning modules.
3. alternative ways of presenting to students the same concept and/or information.
4. revision of materials based on student feedback.
5. materials allowing students to achieve objectives at their own pace or rate.
6. thus faculty members are freed to work with students on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

Although a systems approach to instruction allows for adaptations to individual differences, instructors in the ADN program diagnosed early in the year were not "buying" the individualized approach. Therefore, the following remedial steps were taken:

1. Materials were translated into Spanish. (Some of the translation was done by ADN students.)
2. Some technical terms were first introduced in Spanish and subsequently

translated into English.

3. small group counseling sessions were initiated to determine student anxieties.
4. student tutors were employed to work with students having problems in specific courses.
5. more advanced students were requested to work with less advanced students.
6. short lectures and/or discussions were initiated. (Some of these were taped for student review.)
7. Subject matter was broken into smaller units thus allowing faster evaluation and feedback.

Another program which utilized a bilingual-bicultural approach in a highly affective manner is the Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) Program. This program enrolled unemployed, Chicano, Vietnam veterans preparing them with entry-level skills to pursue post-secondary technical-vocational or baccalaureate degree programs. About one-third of the VUB matriculants did not initially possess a high school diploma, and consequently had to work to obtain their GED within a maximum period of four months.

An individualized, self-paced, systems approach to instruction was utilized in this program. All four instructors (one performed half-time counselor duties) and the Program Director spoke fluent Spanish, and utilized their Spanish to converse and explain materials. Some of the materials, not all, were available in either English or Spanish although more than half of the instruction took place in English (i.e. exams are taken in English) Spanish novels, newspapers, and comic books were available, and utilized by students. Cultural activities promoting the Mexican and Mexican American culture were

encouraged and even promoted.

After one year of operation, the program served 459 students, more than double the budgeted number of Chicano Vietnam veterans. Over 90 percent of those enrolling the pre-college, skill development phase graduated after four months (some of the VUB students, about five percent dropped out because they accepted employment thus the drop-out rate was actually less than six percent). Slightly more than two-thirds of the VUB students completing this phase were pursuing higher educational programs at EPCC. In the GED phase, over 95 percent of the VUB students completed their GED within the alloted four month period. Only one student dropped out without passing his GED exam. Most VUB students unable to pass GED exams within the four-month period continued their efforts and eventually earned it!

Two other EPCC programs in which students developed skills in both English and Spanish were the SER Bilingual Secretarial Program and the SER Junior Executive Management Program. Both, English and Spanish were utilized to teach saleable skills to unemployed, low-income, Mexican American men and women. More than half of the participants were women, heads of households (generally with children). In these two one-year programs, the drop-out rate was, again, less than five percent. Furthermore, all of the 34 students graduating from the two programs had jobs before graduating.

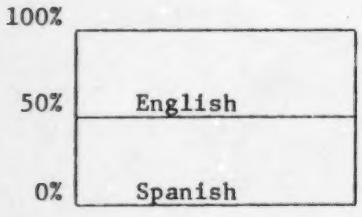
These limited but significant successes, encourage the El Paso Community College faculty and administration to pursue the type of program described in subsequent paragraphs.

C. Definition of Bilingual-Bicultural Education

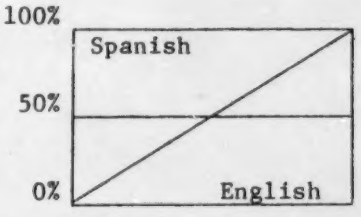
According to the definition of bilingual-bicultural education proposed by Candido de Leon, president of Hostos Community College in New York and Rafael Cortada, President of Metropolitan Community College in Minnesota, a bilingual-bicultural program includes (1) the use of Spanish to continue learning, (2) an intensive program of English, (3) Spanish as a second language and, (4) the bicultural component integrating all of the other factors. The following is derived from Cortada and de Leon's model of bilingual-bicultural education.

1. The use of Spanish to continue learning. This means that some courses and programs would be taught using Spanish and English simultaneously and in a fairly equal dosis: other courses and programs would be taught mostly or completely in Spanish at the beginning while gradually bringing in more Spanish as the students develop in their second language. An example of the former would be graph A: an example of the latter would be graph B.

Graph A



Graph B



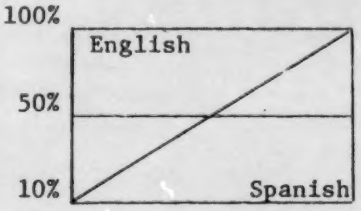
This would be more applicable to students with greater fluency in Spanish than English.

2. An Intensive Program in English. While the student is enrolled in college programs (technical or academic) taught in both languages, he would also be participating in intensive English courses which

stress reading, writing, and speaking while relating much of the course content to the students' intended career goal. To some extent El Paso Community College is already presently implementing this concept with its individualized freshman English program. This effort would benefit all students but would be particularly useful to students whose primary language is not English.

3. Spanish as a Second Language. Students who have not begun their lives speaking Spanish but who are interested in the language will be started off in predominantly English courses — or classes where English is the primary medium of instruction. A graphic description of this is as follows:

Graph A



4. The Bicultural Component Integrating all of the Other Efforts. The bicultural component of a bilingual effort would create a situation which would allow all students to experience the differences and similarities in cultures. While instruction would include materials from both cultures, much of the bicultural thrust would be implemented outside the classroom via a mariachi orchestra, a teatro, a rondalla, speakers, visitations, student activities, and student-faculty exchanges.

B. Implementation

1. Students' viewpoint.

(a) Diagnostic phase: Content instruction is offered only (or mainly) in the dominant language, either Spanish or English. Intensive

study is undertaken in English-as-a-second language or Spanish-as-a-second language. Fluency and literacy in both languages is not emphasized. In fact, it may be necessary to offer remedial studies in the native language in cases where reading and writing skills are not on a level with oral skills. An assessment of each students literacy and fluency in both languages is vital at this stage.

(b) Developmental Phase: Listening and speaking skills in the second language with some limited reading and writing are sought here. While instruction continues in the dominant language, content courses in the second language should be audited or taken. At this point, students should begin considering a decision to continue their programs in the English track primarily with Spanish secondarily, or vice-versa.

(c) Intermediate Phase: Cultural studies and social science courses are pursued in the dominant language of the culture, be it English or Spanish. A student may also choose to take some other studies in the second language.

(d) Bilingual - bicultural Phase: At this stage, the student should be able to function comfortably in either language or culture in a social and professional sense. He should be able to demonstrate language competence and cultural sensitivity at a level where he can perform in either a Spanish or English curriculum.

It should be noted that the student may enter at the diagnostic phase, developmental phase or intermediate phase and hopefully should be able to proceed as fast and as far as his energies, ability and interest allow. In no way

shall the student be forced or coerced into any one of the four phases. The student should have many more options.

D. An Operational Definition of Bilingual - Bicultural Education

While the above-described definition of bilingual-bicultural education establishes some parameters, and sets long range goals, it has become necessary to develop an operational framework. The El Paso Community College staff has developed institutional goals to provide further direction for instructional programs. Some of the proposed goals relating to bilingual, multicultural education are:

1. to provide an environment which promotes awareness, sensitivity and appreciation of our multicultural community.
2. to provide parallel courses in Spanish and to encourage the use of Spanish language in instruction whenever needed and feasable.
3. to cooperate with groups in promoting cultural and recreational activities.
4. to provide varying modes of instruction best suited to the experiences being provided and to the needs and abilities of individual students.
5. to provide opportunities for the development of bilingual capabilities of faculty, staff and students.

With the exception of goal number "2", all goals have been officially approved. Goal number "2" has been approved by the Joint Senate Executive Committee and will be presented for general Joint Senate consideration in the Fall Semester, 1975.

These goals have been refined into measurable objectives for the El Paso Community College 1975-76 academic year. The objectives are specified on the left-hand column with the measurement on the right-hand column.

OBJECTIVES	MEASUREMENT
1. To provide a balance of courses in the development of English and and Spanish language.	Four Spanish grammar and composition courses will be systematized so that course objectives will be clearly specified and exit skills defined by 30 June 1976.
2. To improve offerings so that persons with limited English speaking, reading, and writing skills can improve.	Three English as a Second Language courses will be incorporated into the curriculum and systematized so that course objectives will be clearly specified and exit level skills defined by May 1, 1976.
3. To provide regular course offerings for credit taught in Spanish.	6 non-language development courses will be taught in Spanish by January 20, 1976.
4. To provide opportunities for students to learn in either their native of their dominant language.	50% of the courses will be taught using both English and Spanish by June 30, 1976.
5. to include multi-cultural materials in course offerings.	80% of the courses will have Chicano, Black, and Indian culturally relevant materials by June 30, 1976
6. To include multi-cultural extracurricular activities on behalf of the college.	50% of the student extra class activities will be multicultural (on-going).
7. To refine the college's bilingual-bicultural approach.	A paper focusing on the institutional commitment to bilingual-bicultural education will be developed by Jan. 1, 1976.

While resources, procedures and activities with bench-marks are an integral part of the model, these are too lengthy to present here. What is significant, is that the objectives be outlined specifically enough so that proper evaluations of progress can be made. The first significant steps of a long journey have already been initiated at El Paso Community College.

Gilberto de los Santos
Dean of Instructional Development
El Paso Community College

June 12, 1975

FOOTNOTES

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